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SUBJECT: North Kivu ceasefire holding as MONUC continues redeployment

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Ceasefire violations in North Kivu have been minor since the Kivus Conference and are dwindling in number. PARECO, perhaps with FDLR instigation, appears to be the main offender. MONUC has substantially expanded its mobile bases, and displaced persons have begun to return to those areas. MONUC continues to redeploy peacekeeping troops to the province. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Ceasefire violations have been "very minor" in the wake of the signing of the Kivus Conference Acte d'Engagement January 23, with even less activity over the past 10 days than the previous 10, MONUC's North Kivu Brigade commander Brigadier General Indrajeet Narayan told international facilitators during a briefing February 11 on the military situation in the province.

¶3. (SBU) A majority of the incidents involved PARECO's nocturnal theft of cattle belonging to Tutsis in the Mohito area west of Nkunda's stronghold at Kirolirwe, with resultant distant exchanges of fire with no casualties. There had also been three incidents over the past 10 days in the Tongo-Bambu area, north of Goma in Rutshuru territory, also involving PARECO. Narayan said it appeared that PARECO was instigating most of these incidents, and in MONUC's analysis PARECO was working closely with or instigated by FDLR.

¶4. (SBU) Narayan said that the North Kivu Brigade had more than tripled the number of its mobile operating bases (MOBs) in the province, each consisting of two platoons of 70-75 men, around the periphery of Nkunda's territory. Whereas prior to mid-January, MONUC had nine MOBs (Bunagana, Kibumba, Kirolirwe, Mushake, and five in the vicinity of Goma), it now has 19 (ten new ones at Ishasha, Rugare, Rwindi, Nyanzale, Kaelgera, Tongo, Nyamalima, and three around Sake). These have been now supplemented by three helicopter operating bases (also two platoons each, at Kahuba, Ngungu, and Rubaya) and seven smaller standing combat deployments (one platoon each at Karambi, Kahira, Katale, Mohito, Karuba, JTN, and Ntamugenga).

¶5. (SBU) Narayan described these deployments as a "pre-disengagement," as true disengagement would not take place before establishment of the Mixed Technical Commission on Peace and Security, but the effect had been palpable. He said that there was a noticeable return of displaced persons in the areas surrounding the mobile bases, as the local population had confidence in MONUC's presence. The bases had been responsible for what MONUC learned about most of the shooting incidents, as the MONUC focal point for ceasefire violations had not been utilized except once by PARECO.

¶6. (SBU) Narayan said that the North Kivu Brigade was also beginning to focus on the threat posed by FDLR, which is why it had established an MOB in Ishasha (near the Uganda border and Lake

Edward), one of FDLR's concentrations. He said the Brigade would be establishing further MOBs in Lofo and Kasu in the Lubero area in the Grand Nord and in Kashabera in Walikale territory, all designed to put pressure on FDLR. The Brigade had been training eight FARDC battalions at Nayalke (near Beni) and contemplated using these to deal with FDLR. The training was of limited duration and value, but it was hoped that these battalions at least would not have had the habit of living in too close proximity to FDLR.

17. (SBU) Narayan said that the North Kivu Brigade was being reinforced by more than a thousand troops (Senegalese, Bolivian, Guatemalan, and the fourth Indian battalion in Katanga), of which 30 per cent had arrived and 80-85 per cent would arrive within two weeks. He said that MONUC had not picked up information suggesting re-supply or reinforcement by the FARDC or any of the armed groups.

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